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OLC 72-0652

26 May 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with Richard Perle re Briefing on
Soviet Strategic Force Development

1. Shortly before lunch I received a call from Richard Perle, on the staff of Senator Jackson's Subcommittee on National Security and International Operations. Perle said that "we" would like to have a briefing this afternoon or Saturday morning on the pre-SALT NIE on future Soviet strategic force development and Soviet MIRVs. I told Perle I would check on this and be back in touch with him. After consulting the Director, I attempted to reach Perle, but Dorothy Fosdick, of the staff, called back saying Perle was tied up but she was aware of his request (she said Senator Jackson had asked for it) and asked if I had arranged the briefing. I told Miss Fosdick we had problems with Perle's request, that this request would involve discussion of the SALT situation on which we have no information and this information would have to be obtained elsewhere. Miss Fosdick expressed surprise at our response and I told her I was merely relaying the decision that had been given to me.

2. A short time later Richard Perle called and said he wanted to be sure he understood the situation with respect to getting the briefing. I then told Perle what I had previously told Miss Fosdick and which I repeated to him a number of times during this conversation. It was that I had relayed his request to the Director and his response was that we could not do this since the request inextricably involved the SALT situation on which we had no information--the information would have to come from someone else. Perle agreed that the request involved SALT but said ". . . what strategic intelligence doesn't involve SALT." I merely said again that we did not have any information on the SALT situation.

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3. Perle said he didn't really want anything on SALT, that we could treat the cutoff date as of yesterday. He added that the SALT agreement was being concluded at 1:00 p.m. today. He asked if the information was just unavailable to him or was it also unavailable to the Senator. I told him I did not make this distinction in my conversation with the Director but merely relayed the request as he had given it to me that "we" wanted the briefing. I said the Director had given me an answer and said if the Senator wanted to talk with the Director he could give him a call. Perle said he would "see what Scoop wants to do" and added this was a powerful argument for Senator Cooper's bill. He said if ". . . we can't look thoroughly into Soviet missiles we can't make an intelligent decision on SALT." I let the Cooper remark pass and told him we had tried in the past to be as forthcoming with Miss Fosdick and him as we could be, but that we had a problem with this specific request. He said if he had asked for this briefing a week ago there would have been no problem, and I responded that he had been given briefings on this subject and probably had already been exposed to this information.

4. Perle then asked if there was a new order in effect concerning briefings. I told him that it should be obvious to all parties that there was something in the wind but any information on this would have to come from sources other than the Agency. Perle then asked where he was supposed to go for basic data on SALT strategy. I told him I wasn't recommending that he go to any place and would not want to give him directions on this, but added that of course he was at liberty to ask anyone he wished. Perle commented again that he did not want anything on SALT per se, adding that he had gotten that information from the White House yesterday, but said they "don't have your technical people. General Haig couldn't answer questions that I have on Soviet strategic problems." I commented I was sure General Haig had this information available to him if he wanted it. Perle again said he would like to know what he was supposed to do. I told him he could call whomever he thought he should call, but went on to say he had directed the question to us and that while we normally try to cooperate with their staff, I had raised his question with the Director and I had now given him the Director's answer.

5. Perle then said he would like to rephrase his request saying he wanted a briefing on the NIE, period, --the most recent pre-SALT information with no specific question on SALT. I told him this is essentially what he had

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originally asked me and on which I had given him an answer. Perle then asked me if I was saying the information he requested was not available. I told him I hadn't said this. I then repeated the Director's instructions as I had given them to him before. Perle said it was not a question of our not having the information, that surely we had the NIE. I told him he was misinterpreting what I had said. He said there were things that bore on SALT on which they were briefed dozens of times. He said the question of how many SS-9s the Russians have bears on SALT but he could not understand why he can not now have a briefing on the NIE which he could have had a week ago. I again repeated the party line to Perle and said if the Senator had any questions and wanted to talk to the Director, Mr. Helms would be glad to talk to him and that was the only suggestion I could make. Perle ended the conversation by saying he would see what Scoop wanted to do.

6. About 5:00 p.m. Perle called again, assured me that we were still friends, and said that Senator Jackson would call the Director on Tuesday.

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[Redacted]
Deputy Legislative Counsel

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